

# Capecitabine

You have been prescribed a course of oral capecitabine. Before starting this course you will need to have a special blood test (called DPYD testing). This is to ensure your body is able to process (break down) capecitabine and to help prevent severe side effects which could be life threatening. It is important that you read this leaflet, together with our publication on systemic anti-cancer therapy (PI02), available from the staff treating you and/or the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre.

## How to take capecitabine

- Take your tablets **twice a day**, about 10–12 hours apart.
- Swallow tablets whole with a glass of water (**not juice**) just after food.

## Side effects

If you experience any of the symptoms listed here, you should **stop taking capecitabine tablets immediately**. Call the 24-hour Acute Oncology Service on **07825 028855** for advice on managing these symptoms. They will also advise you when you should restart taking capecitabine.

**If you develop a skin rash and/or blisters, a sensitivity to being in the light, a cough, a fever or generally feel unwell with cold/flu-like symptoms: Phone the AOS number immediately.**



### Hand-foot syndrome

If you have pain, redness, swelling or peeling of your hands and/or feet, stop taking capecitabine and phone the AOS number immediately.



### Central chest pain

Stop taking capecitabine and **dial 999 (go to A&E immediately)**. Let the Cancer Centre staff know what has happened.



### Diarrhoea

This is usually mild. However, if you have 4 bowel movements per day *more* than usual, or diarrhoea at night, stop taking capecitabine and phone the AOS number immediately.



### Fever or infection

If you have a temperature of 37.5°C or greater, or below 36°C or show other signs of infection, stop taking capecitabine and phone the AOS number immediately, including nights and weekends.



### Nausea and vomiting

This is usually mild. However, if you vomit more than once in 24 hours or if nausea is making it hard to eat or drink, stop taking capecitabine and phone the AOS number immediately.



### Sore mouth

If you have painful mouth ulcers or swelling in your mouth, stop taking capecitabine and phone the AOS number immediately. Ask the staff treating you about mouth care.

## What do I do if...?

### I have been sick after taking my capecitabine tablets

- Do **not** take another dose to replace the lost one. Phone the AOS number.

### I forgot to take the capecitabine dose

- If you miss a dose, and it is within 2 hours from when the dose should have been taken, take the dose. Make sure you take it just after food.
- If it is longer than 2 hours since you should have taken the dose, **do not** take it. Take the next dose as usual - do **not** double it up. If you are unsure, phone the AOS number.

### There are tablets left over

- Do not take them.
- Bring the leftover tablets to your nurse or pharmacist when you next come to the Cancer Centre. Tell the doctor or nurse how many were left over when you see them at your appointment.

### I have run out of tablets before I am due to come to the hospital clinic for another supply

- Contact the Cancer Centre (see below)
- Do not ask your GP to re-supply capecitabine

## Other medication

It is very important that you let your oncologist and/or pharmacist know if you are taking any other medication while you are on a course of capecitabine. In particular, you should inform them if you are on any of the following:

- Antacids
- Warfarin
- Phenytoin
- Allopurinol
- Folic and folinic acid

Note: This is not a comprehensive list, so you must let your oncologist and/or pharmacist know about all other medications you are taking (either prescribed or over the counter).

## Contacts

### For questions about managing side effects and urgent medical advice:

**24 hour Acute Oncology Service (AOS) .....07825 028855**

For non-urgent questions about medication:

Pharmacy patient helpline      Mon–Fri: 9.00am–12.00noon, 2.00–4.00pm ....01438 286150

MVCC Pharmacy                      Mon–Fri: 9.00am–5.00pm .....020 3826 2505

Pharmacy email for patients      [medinfo.enhtr@nhs.net](mailto:medinfo.enhtr@nhs.net)